

ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF CANADA · FIRST LINK® · 2022-2024

Behind every referral is a family.

From Awareness to Infrastructure

Over three years, a national First Link® awareness effort grew into something more lasting: a self-sustaining healthcare referral pathway that meets caregivers where they already are, then reaches the physicians and pharmacists they already trust.



2022

ESTABLISH

National awareness among caregivers & families



2023

OPTIMIZE

Sharper targeting, video & media efficiency



2024

EXPAND

Activating physicians, clinics & pharmacists

3 yrs

ONE CONTINUOUS STRATEGY, COMPOUNDED

64K+

CLICKS TO FIRST LINK, 2022-23

507

HCP LOCATIONS EDUCATED, 2024

124

WARM REFERRAL LEADS TO LOCAL SOCIETIES

01

Executive Summary

A dementia diagnosis rarely arrives with a map. In the weeks that follow, a spouse or an adult child becomes a caregiver almost overnight, searching, often alone, for help they don't yet know how to name. In healthcare, this is the quiet, recurring problem: the support people need often exists long before they can find their way to it. First Link® was built for exactly that gap. It connects people affected by dementia, and the families around them, to guidance and community at the moment they need it most.

The obstacle was never the program's worth. It was connection: reaching the right people at the right time, and holding open a dependable path to the front door. Over three consecutive years, Intent Media treated that challenge as a single strategy to be compounded, not three campaigns to be restarted. Each year's evidence was allowed to underwrite the next year's ambition.

In **2022**, the task was foundational: establish national awareness among caregivers and families. A disciplined mix of paid social, programmatic and radio delivered **6.4M impressions and 29,110 clicks** to First Link, early proof that a focused, market-weighted buy could move a hard-to-reach audience at scale.

In **2023**, the question shifted from reach to efficiency. With a full year of audience, creative and channel signal to draw on, the team concentrated spending where it had already proven to work and introduced video, earning **21% more clicks on a slightly smaller budget, a 51% stronger click-through rate, and a programmatic cost-per-click cut 41% year over year.**

In **2024**, the program made its most consequential move: reaching past the consumer entirely. A caregiver's journey almost always passes through a doctor's office or a pharmacy counter, and so the team turned to the referral pathway itself, educating practitioners across **507 healthcare locations** and surfacing **124 clinics and pharmacies** that asked their local Society to follow up.

The story here is not three campaigns. It is one strategy, deliberately compounded: awareness that became efficiency, and efficiency that became infrastructure.

THE ARC, IN NUMBERS

2022 · ESTABLISH

6.4M

Impressions delivered · 29,110
clicks to First Link

2023 · OPTIMIZE

+21%

More clicks on a smaller budget ·
programmatic CPC –41% YoY

2024 · EXPAND

124

Named, opted-in clinics &
pharmacies requesting local
follow-up

CUMULATIVE

507

Healthcare locations educated on
the First Link referral pathway



Community changes Everything

For people living with
dementia, we are your first
link to a caring community.

Alzheimer
Society

LET'S CONNECT

02

The Challenge

Dementia is a national health issue with a deeply personal front line. For the Alzheimer Society of Canada, First Link is the program that connects people affected by dementia to support, knowledge and community at the moment they need it most.

The value of the program was never in question. The difficulty was reaching people and holding a dependable path to the door. Three structural challenges shaped the work, and none could be met in a single season.



A hard-to-reach, emotionally loaded audience

Caregivers are time-poor, stretched, and rarely search for "dementia support" by name. Awareness had to find them inside health, family and news moments, not wait to be found.



A national budget against a national need

A finite media investment had to create meaningful presence across major Canadian markets in two languages, with every dollar accountable to a clear, measurable next step.



Awareness alone doesn't build a referral system

Consumers can be reached with media. But the most durable path to First Link runs through the healthcare professionals families already trust, a channel media had not yet reached.

The brief evolved with the results. Establishing awareness was only the beginning; the real prize was a self-sustaining pathway from kitchen table, to clinic, to First Link.

The measure of success moved, too. From the first campaign, the program was held to evidence of *intent* (landing-page actions to contact a local Society, email it, or download a brochure), not impressions alone. That discipline set the direction for everything that followed.

By year three, the same principle reached its logical conclusion: a caregiver reached in-market, reached again in the waiting room, and reminded by the professional beside them: one family, several trusted touchpoints, at essentially the same time.

03

Strategic Approach

One program, three deliberate acts. Each year answered a different strategic question, and each answer was built on the evidence of the year before.

2022

ESTABLISH

"Can we reach caregivers at national scale?"

- Concentrated media in high-population Canadian markets, EN & FR
- Aligned to health, family & news content to reach caregivers in context
- Paid social and programmatic display, amplified by market radio
- Three creative territories: Support, Community, Knowledge

2023

OPTIMIZE

"How much more efficient can we make it?"

- Concentrated spend on the highest-yield audiences & tactics
- Introduced video to lift engagement and completion
- Doubled down on the top geographies: Ontario & Alberta
- Tightened creative to the square-video formats that performed

2024

EXPAND

"How do we build a lasting referral pathway?"

- Extended beyond consumers to healthcare professionals
- Field-rep education across 232 clinics + 275 pharmacies
- Waiting-room video, take-home brochures & in-person surveys
- Endemic physician reach via *Canadian Family Physician*, print & digital

→ **2024 did not replace the consumer strategy; it layered on top of it.** Patients and caregivers were still being reached in-market, while the same message now met them again in the waiting room and at the pharmacy counter, reinforced by the professional they trust. Awareness stopped being a seasonal event and started becoming a system.

CONTINUITY AS METHOD

Because the strategy carried forward instead of resetting each January, learning compounded. Audience, creative and channel signal from one year became the starting advantage of the next: the reason a comparable budget could do measurably more work in 2023 than in 2022.

BUILT TO BE MEASURED

Every act was tied to an observable next step: a landing-page action, a completed video, a brochure taken from a waiting-room rack, a named request for follow-up. Evidence, not impressions, defined whether each year had earned the next.

04

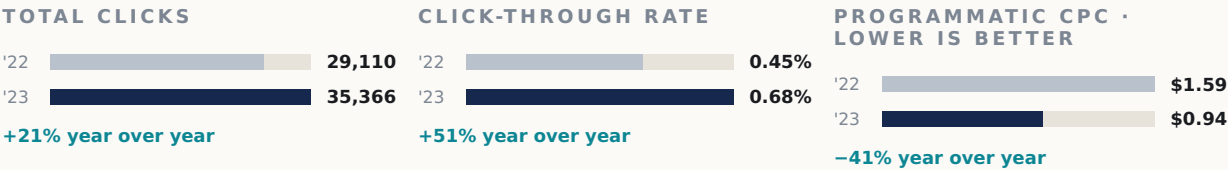
Results & Proof

Every year cleared its bar, and set a higher one. The consumer campaigns proved reach, then efficiency; the healthcare expansion proved a pathway.

2022	ESTABLISH	2023	OPTIMIZE	2024	EXPAND
6.4M		35,366		507	
Impressions delivered		Clicks · +21% YoY		Clinics & pharmacies engaged	
29,110		0.68%		6,817	
Clicks to First Link		Click-through rate · +51% YoY		Brochures taken · 68% pick-up	
779		\$0.94		124	
Landing-page actions		Programmatic CPC · -41% YoY		HCP locations requesting follow-up	
Social rated above average on Facebook ad quality: the top tier for audience relevance.			A new, warm referral pipeline handed directly to local Societies .		

The efficiency story, 2022 → 2023

Holding budget essentially flat, the refined 2023 program converted the prior year's learning into gains across every headline metric: the clearest proof that continuity compounds.



INSIDE THE 2024 HEALTHCARE EXPANSION

Across 232 family-practice clinics and 275 community pharmacies in Ontario, Alberta and Saskatchewan, field reps educated staff, placed **10,000 take-home brochures**, and completed in-person surveys at high rates: **82% of clinics and 88% of pharmacies**.

THE SIGNAL THAT MATTERED

Caregivers were named as a key group to reach by **42% of clinics and 69% of pharmacies**. And while 69% of clinics had referred to an Alzheimer Society in the past year, only 25% of pharmacies had, revealing a large, addressable referral channel.

05

Insights & Lasting Impact

01

Continuity compounds: don't restart, refine.

The biggest driver of 2023's efficiency wasn't a new idea; it was a full year of clean signal carried forward. Persistence is a performance strategy.

02

Follow the audience to their real-world moments.

Caregivers are hard to reach through search or interest targeting alone, but they are consistently present in clinics and pharmacies, beside a professional they trust.

03

Pharmacists are the overlooked node in the patient pathway.

They interact frequently with patients and caregivers, yet far fewer had ever referred to an Alzheimer Society: an untapped channel, now identified and addressable.

04

Measure the next step, not just the impression.

From landing-page actions to brochure pick-up to named follow-up requests, holding the work to evidence of intent is what turned a media campaign into a referral system.

64K+

Clicks driven to First Link across two consumer campaigns

507

Healthcare locations educated on the First Link referral process

124

Warm HCP leads delivered to local Societies for direct follow-up

What began as a seasonal awareness buy is now a multi-audience referral infrastructure: a pipeline that keeps working long after the media stops running.

Why this matters

For any organization trying to turn awareness into action, the First Link arc offers a model for doing it responsibly, and well.

CHARITIES & FOUNDATIONS

A blueprint for stretching finite budgets: compounding learning year over year and turning awareness into a measurable, self-sustaining referral pipeline.

HOSPITALS & HEALTHCARE

Proof that the point of care is also a point of connection, and that physicians and pharmacists can be reached as a trusted, high-intent referral channel.

PUBLIC SECTOR & PROCUREMENT

Evidence of an accountable, insight-led partner who measures the next step, adapts as the need changes, and builds infrastructure, not just impressions.

AWARENESS → EFFICIENCY → INFRASTRUCTURE

Awareness is a moment.
Infrastructure lasts.

Three years. One strategy. A referral pathway from the kitchen table to the clinic to First Link: proof that the most valuable thing a campaign can leave behind is not attention, but infrastructure that outlives it.

Intent Media · Connecting people to purpose.